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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4595  
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 0881  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 9656  
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 4161  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1617  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 3343  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 6752  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 4367  
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL CALCUTTA 0750  
RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU 0751  
RUDKIA/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI 0404  
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 2682  
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RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
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RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 RANGOON 000700

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STATE FOR EAP/MLS; PACOM FOR FPA

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SUBJECT: NLD REACTION TO GAMBARI VISIT

REF: RANGOON 679

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Classified By: CDA Shari Villarosa for Reasons 1.4 (b,d)

1.(C) Summary: Charge met NLD Chairman U Aung Shwe, Secretary U Lwin, and Committee Member U Nyunt Wei at their

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request to discuss UN Under Secretary General Gambari's briefing to diplomats about his visit to Burma (reftel). They offered more details of their own meeting with Gambari and indicated support for continued UN Headquarters involvement. Based on their impressions, we offer some useful points to make when Gambari briefs the UN Security Council (UNSC). End Summary.

12. (C) The NLD leaders were especially interested in more details of Gambari's meeting with Than Shwe and if he had used the term "common ground." Charge explained that Gambari repeatedly used that term during his briefing to characterize the role of the UN in facilitating more inclusive political discussions, including with the NLD. Gambari had described Than Shwe as recognizing the need to make compromises, but cautioned that it might require more prodding of the regime to see results.

13. (C) The NLD leaders said Gambari urged them to join the National Convention to help "save the SPDC's face." The NLD leaders told Gambari about NLD's earlier participation, but found their proposals ignored and 104 broad principles announced from the top without any consultation with NLD. U Lwin said that the regime organized mass rallies with the government-organized Union Solidarity Development Association (USDA) to claim popular support for the principles. He pointed out at the time that the people cannot support something that they do not know about. U Myo Nyunt, then Convention Chairman, replied that the Convention would go on

even without participation of NLD. U Nyunt Wai complained that the SPDC never announce anything publicly, "it is part of their code," and worried that they would take advantage of NLD. The NLD leaders handed Gambari a letter from ethnic leaders expressing regret he did not speak with them directly. Gambari told them he had relied on the SPDC arranging meetings.

14. (C) While the NLD leaders welcomed Gambari coming on a fact-finding mission, they got the impression that Gambari's primary focus was to persuade the NLD to rejoin the National Convention without conditions. They also complained that Gambari wanted to talk about process, while the NLD leaders insisted that political decisions had to be made first regarding the possibility of real debate and the fundamental principles for discussion (indicating they did not want to be bound by the principles already announced above).

15. (C) U Aung Shwe made it clear that NLD welcomed UN Headquarters involvement to get SPDC and NLD talking, but they did not have confidence in local UN officers to do that. They complained that during their meeting with Gambari, Charles Petrie kept insisting that the UN could play a role at the "technical" level, whereas the NLD leaders asserted that senior level engagement by all parties would be required to get any talks going. They would welcome the appointment of new UN envoy answerable to the Secretary General in New York, saying they had positive dealings with the previous envoys.

16. (C) The NLD leaders also expressed an interest in Gambari's discussions regarding humanitarian assistance, and in particular Aung San Suu Kyi's comment that the UN needed to listen more to the people. The NLD leaders agreed with that comment. U Lwin described his discussions with the UNDP regarding what came to be known as the Global Fund. He received cursory briefings, was never told the amount of

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money involved, and then the UNDP blamed NLD statements for the Fund's cancellation.

17. (C) Charge assured the NLD senior leaders that U.S. pressure would continue to strive for an open, inclusive political dialogue and that we would follow Gambari's advice and keep pushing the regime to open up more. The leaders said NLD had always been flexible, and that they wanted a smooth and non-violent transition. U Nyunt Wai, however, added that while NLD wanted to achieve democracy peacefully, "the soldiers are trained to take pain."

18. (C) Comment: The NLD leaders remain skeptical of the Gambari visit, and will need to see concrete progress on issues that address their concerns. As U Lwin said, they have been bullied, harassed, and threatened for years. It is also clear that they have no confidence in the UNDP, as the lead UN agency in Rangoon, to be an objective facilitator to achieve political dialogue, but they do have faith in UN Headquarters. We should urge Gambari and the Secretary General to stay personally engaged until a genuine dialogue gets underway. Some other points that we should make after Gambari's briefing of the UNSC: NLD joining a sham political process does not advance democratization; we must insist that all parties be able to openly discuss the political way forward; they should not be bound by a roadmap imposed by the generals. The onus should not be on NLD to "save SPDC's face," but on SPDC to quit stonewalling and start a genuine political dialogue. End Comment.  
VILLAROSA